



Supplementary Appeal Western Sahara

Confidence Building Measures

January 2007



Executive summary

Pursuant to the United Nations Resolutions 1282 of 1999 and subsequent resolutions, UNHCR, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Western Sahara have been promoting, with the Moroccan and Algerian authorities and the POLISARIO, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) that facilitate person to person contacts between the Saharawi refugees in the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria and their family members in the communities of origin in Western Sahara.

The main objective of the CBM project is to increase personal contacts between Saharawi communities in the refugee camps and those in the Territory. The measures include **family visits** between the refugee camps in Tindouf and those in the territory of Western Sahara, as well as offering a **telephone service** in the refugee camps in Tindouf. The project is also designed to comprise **seminars** intended to bring together prominent members of the Saharawi communities from the refugee camps and the Territory at a neutral venue to discuss topics that are non-political.

The programme at a glance

Title	Confidence Building Measures
Beneficiaries	Family Visits: 2,820 people Telephone Service: 25,000 calls Seminars: 120 participants
Time frame	1 January - 31 December 2007
Total requirements	US\$ 3,459,780



Refugee camp in the Tindouf region. UNHCR /C. Mirtenbaum

Working environment

The context

Based on UN Security Council Resolution 1282 of 1999 and subsequent resolutions, the joint UNHCR/MINURSO Confidence Building Measures project was launched on 5 March 2004. Since the inception of the family visit program until the end of December 2006, a total of 2,905 people benefited from the project. Of this total, 1,498 refugees from the camps in Tindouf visited their family members in several cities in the Territory, while 1,407 family members from the Territory visited the refugee camps in Tindouf.

The telephone service, which was established in the camps to enable the refugees to communicate regularly with their family members in the Territory, has been operating smoothly since the beginning of the project. By the end of December 2006, over 64,000 telephone calls were made by the refugees to their family members in the Territory.

The needs

The CBMs are the only UN-facilitated cross-border activity under implementation which is helping to maintain contacts between the Saharawi communities.

The number of actual beneficiaries proposed for the family visits falls way below the more than 19,200 requests registered so far. A proposal to increasing the number of beneficiaries is being considered with the relevant parties.

Alternatives are being explored to reduce the high costs of installing the required telephone system infrastructure in the Dakhla camp, which have so far prevented telephone communications from the camp to the Territory.



A Saharawi family waiting to board their plane. UNHCR / L. Khalaf.

Main objectives of the Project for 2007

The main objective of the Western Sahara Confidence Building Measures Project is to increase personal contacts between Saharawi communities in the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria and those in the territory of Western Sahara.

Planning figures

The number of beneficiaries of the family visit program for 2007 has been set at 2,820 persons, taking into consideration the average number of beneficiaries per weekly flights (60 people per flight and 47 planned flights for the year). The number of beneficiaries for the telephone service is expected to be approximately 25,000 in 2007.

Strategy and Activities

Based on project requirements, UNHCR has created working teams in the Territory and in the Tindouf region based in Rabouni. The teams are directed and co-ordinated by a roving UNHCR Staff member, who is also responsible for liaising and co-ordinating activities with MINURSO, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General,

government authorities on both sides of the border and POLISARIO.

Activities include:

- Ensuring air transport service for family visits between the refugee camps and the Territory.
- Guaranteeing the functioning of the telephone system established in the refugee camps and expansion of the service to the Dakhla refugee camp.
- Organizing three seminars during the year to bring together community leaders from the refugee camps and the Territory.

A framework of reference has been prepared for launching the seminars intended to bring together, in a neutral venue, prominent members of the Saharawi communities from the refugee camps and the Territory. Several subjects and different venues have been proposed to the parties. Three seminars are expected to be organized in 2007 with an average of 40 participants per seminar.

Impact

The main impact of the operation will be humanitarian in nature, as it will enable the renewal of family and personal ties between the refugees and their family members, who have been separated for nearly thirty years. Ideally, the implementation of the CBMs should serve to encourage the concerned parties to maintain communications in their quest for achieving a long-term political solution to the Western Sahara problem.



Family reunion in La' Youn in November 2005/ UNHCR / L. Khalaf

Challenges

The uncertainty surrounding the future of the Western Sahara may affect the implementation of the project.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence

Number of offices	Territory: 1 Tindouf: 1
Total staff	32
<i>International</i>	5
<i>National</i>	22
<i>UNVs</i>	5

Coordination

CBM activities will be implemented jointly by MINURSO and UNHCR in close coordination with government authorities and the POLISARIO. UNHCR will work in close co-ordination with the MINURSO staff specifically assigned for this operation. Close relations have been established with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Western Sahara.

Total requirements

Sectors	Amount in USD
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	1,122,935
Domestic Needs, Household Items	81,000
Legal Assistance/Protection	1,001,000
Transport/Logistics	433,056
Total Operations	2,637,991
Indirect Support Costs 7% *	184,659
Programme Support	637,130
TOTAL	3,459,780

*A 7% cost has been added to the total operational requirements to meet the indirect support costs in UNHCR.

In addition, a significant share of the operational costs, such as chartering planes for family visits and providing vehicles for transporting all beneficiaries (over half a million US dollars) will be borne by MINURSO. The specific contributions of MINURSO for 2007 are currently under discussion and will be finalized in the working Memorandum of Understanding.



Welcome home! UNHCR/L. Khalaf



LEGEND

- UNHCR sub office
- UNHCR presence
- Refugee camp
- Town of interest
- MINURSO Team Site (Airfield)
- Main town or village
- Secondary town or village
- International boundary
- Main road
- Secondary road
- Railway
- Fortified Wall (The Berm)

ELEVATION
(Above mean sea level)

- Below mean sea level
- 0 to 250 metres
- 250 to 500 metres
- 500 to 750 metres
- 750 to 1000 metres
- 1000 to 1750 metres
- 1750 to 2500 metres

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